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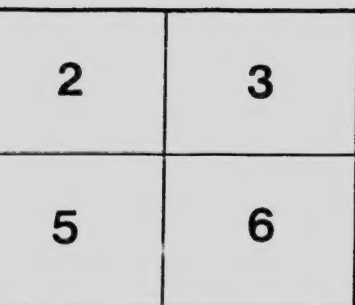
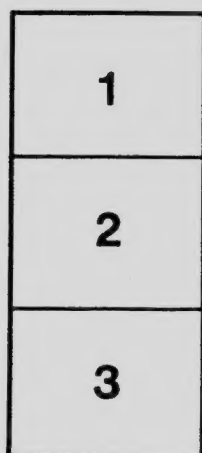
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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE OF THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC
Horticultural Service Home Gardens Section

CIRCULAR No. 35

GROWING PEAS

IN QUEBEC

— BY —

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History

Peas belong to the leguminosae family. They have been grown in the Province of Quebec since the early days of the colony, and since a few years this crop has assumed greater importance. In 1918, 1,650,000 bushels were harvested on 107,000 acres, or an average yield of 15½ bushels per acre. In 1917, 800,000 bushels have been grown or an average of 14 bushels per acre.

Uses of peas

Shelled peas are used as food for man and animals. Good pea soup is delicious, hygienic and most wholesome for workers. When they cannot be boiled, peas may be used as concentrated feed for live stock ; mixed with oats or barley, whole or finely ground, they constitute an ideal feed for hogs.

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The straw may be used as litter. Empty pods, when not injured too much by bad weather are fed sheep advantageously.

Climate and soils

The climate of Eastern Canada is favorable to the culture of peas, particularly in the south-western section of the Province of Quebec.

Clay loams, well supplied with minerals, phosphoric acid and potash, are the best for pea crops. White clay soils were formerly considered as the best pea-growing soils. This plant will thrive in all loamy or light soils providing they are limy enough.

Fertilizers

Peas, as a leguminous plant, take their nitrogen from the atmosphere and consequently do not need fresh manuring. On soils not provided with sufficient phosphoric acid, as many may be found in this Province, basic slag may be spread the previous fall at the rate of 4 to 500 lbs per acre. It would be superfluous to add that peas as all leguminous plants, require a soil rich in lime to give a quick growth.

Place in rotation

Peas are generally planted in an old sod or pasture. In a six-year rotation, they may occupy the place of a hoed crop; they clean the soil, enrich it with nitrogen and are an excellent preparation for heavy crops of cereals, oats, barley or wheat.

Preparation of the soil

Plough deep in the fall in light soils.

Peas require perfect drainage, well-levelled beds, with gutters not too deep. Convex or hollow beds will only yield half-crops.

The soil should be loose enough and the seed properly buried .

Seeding

(a) *Choice of varieties.* — The following varieties have been tested on experimental plots at the Oka Agricultural Institute with satisfactory results.

Golden Vine. — Small yellowish pea, very smooth.

Canadian Beauty. — Large yellowish pea, early and productive.

Prussian Blue. — Pea of average size, of a blueish color, will ripen 11 or 12 days later than the Golden Vine.

(b) *Choice of seed.* — Selection is imperative for peas just as for any other seeds. It is important to plant only good, smooth peas, round and of uniform size, and to remove all those that may be cracked or attacked by insects. The best treatment for pea weevils consists in submitting the seed to carbon bisulphide gasses.

(c) *Time of planting:* — As far as possible, peas should be planted between May 10th and 20.

(d) *Rate of planting:* — For small varieties from 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ bushels per acre will be used ; and from $1\frac{3}{4}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ bushels for large varieties.

(e) *How to plant :* — Peas are planted broadcast or in drills with the hand or a planter. The best method is in drills with a disk planter.

The depth of seeding may range from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches according to the nature and moisture of the soil ; in heavy and moist soils, rather shallow ; deeper in light and dry soils.

Harvest

(a) *Time :* — Peas are harvested when vines are practically all dry and pods are turning yellow.

(b) *How to harvest peas :* — They are usually harvested with a hand scythe. An expert may cut from one to one acre and a half per day. On large areas, a special cutting machine fitted with a special attachment to raise fallen plants before cutting, may be used.

(c) *Drying :* — Peas are allowed to dry during three or four days before they are taken in. It will be advantageous not to leave them in the field too long so as to keep the straw in the best possible shape.

(d) *Thrashing* : — This work is done with an ordinary thrasher. When peas are very dry, a few rows of teeth may be removed to prevent their getting cracked.

Yield

Peas give an average yield of 18 to 20 bushels per acre; under very favorable conditions, as much as 30 bushels may be raised. Peas weigh 60 lbs per bushel.

Conclusion

Peas are an improving as well as remunerative crop. They enrich the soil with nitrogen and improve its physical texture. For this reason, they should be given an important place in rotation on most of the farms in this Province. At five cents per pound they will yield gross returns ranging from \$50 to \$100 per acre and practically do not require more work and growing expenditures than wheat, barley or oats.



